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ABSTRACT

The role of "woman manager" is confusing at best. On the one hand, the woman manager is told to forget that she is a woman; on the other, she is advised to cultivate feminine qualities to achieve managerial positions in departments where these qualities are valued. Women's participation in management increased slowly. Whereas one-third of the work force is made up of women, less than 2 percent are business executives. Although a number of studies demonstrate that there are no differences of any consequence to management between the mental, motivational, or physical capabilities of men and women, there is discrimination against women in business and government organizations. Stereotypic prejudgment is especially acute in the area of promotions. Although it is evident that women are not advancing in organizational hierarchies as fast as men, it is unclear whether this differential advancement is due to bias, discrimination, choice, or inexperience. If the study of women as managers is to lead to any meaningful insights into gender differences, then there are at least four issues that must be addressed: (1) differentiating highly mobile managers from less mobile managers, (2) differentiating promotion from advancement, (3) determining the effects of the "velvet ghetto," and (4) determining the effects of communication on the advancement of women in organizations. (HOD)

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Women in Management: Implications for Communication Researchers

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The 1980's have produced an "explosion of interest" in women and work (Fitzgerald and Crites, 1980). Popular books of advice for the woman manager abound, yet systematic studies of the complex problems faced by these women are limited (Ozawa, 1976). One of the problems is that while women are working in management, they are not working in the same jobs as men. The conditions which create and maintain such gender differences in work have not been clearly identified (Feldberg and Glenn, 1979). Some researchers argue that gender is a secondary issue in the study of management careers, that women and men who want to succeed face the same battles (Yorks, 1976). Yet, even though a number of studies indicate that women managers perform as credibly as men (Larwood, Wood and Inderlied, 1978), women have not been successfully integrated into positions of power and authority within the organization (Terborg, Peters, Ilgen and Smith, 1977).

The role of "woman manager" is confusing at best. On the one hand, the woman manager is told to "forget you're a woman" (Koehn, 1976); on the other, she is advised to cultivate "feminine qualities" to achieve managerial positions in departments such as consumer relations where these qualities are valued (Powell, 1980). According to Zellman (1976), "because the power structure of our society is almost entirely male dominated and male run, most institutions are designed to reflect male values and to accommodate men" (p. 34). Perhaps as a reflection of these values, in one study, both male and female managers rated themselves as "masculine" on the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Birdsall, 1980).

The government has mandated that women will be "moving up the ladder" (Baron, 1977). How fast this happens and with what success has yet to be

determined. Thus, this paper examines the position of women as managers in organizations today, the differential treatment of women and men in organizations, and women's attitudes toward promotion in order to identify issues which need to be considered before we will fully understand the place of women at work today.

The Place of Women as Managers in Organizations

According to Linden (1977), "by any measure--social, psychological, economic--the single most important change in the American way of life in the postwar era has been the extraordinary influx of women into the labor market" (p. 25). In the 1920's the 20 percent of women who worked outside the home represented a "population of the dispossessed" (Linden, 1977). They came from poor backgrounds and worked in services or sweatshop-type industries. By 1977, close to 50 percent of all women worked outside the home (Linden, 1977), and the Labor Department estimates that by 1990, 59 percent of all adult women will be earning a paycheck (Linden, 1981).

Women make up approximately one-third of the workforce, but less than five percent of women are in middle management and less than two percent are business executives (Koehn, 1976). Women's participation in managerial jobs has increased slowly. In 1940, four percent of company executives were women; by 1978, the percentage of women executives had not topped six percent (Harris, 1978). Among all individuals with college degrees, 25 percent of men are managers or administrators while less than 10 percent of women hold these jobs (Linden, 1981). A 1976 study of 163 U.S. companies indicated that in over half of the companies women held two percent or less of the first line supervisory jobs. In three-fourths of the companies women held two percent or less of the middle management jobs, and in over

three-fourths of the companies women held none of the top management jobs (Kanter, 1977). This finding is supported by a 1976 study--in a random sample of 354 salaried employees from six organizations, none of the top or middle managers were women (Reif, Newstrom and St. Louis, 1976).

Despite data reflecting the small proportion of women in management positions, women are encouraged to seek careers in management. Veiga (1977) claims that the number of women in upper level management positions is beginning to increase, while Orth and Jacobs (1971) note that women "fare reasonable well" in retailing, creative fields such as advertising and publishing, some financial institutions such as banks, and manufacturing and industrial sales.

Nevertheless, given the small representation of women at management levels in the majority of organizations today, Kanter's (1977) observation that "women populate organizations, but they practically never run them" (p. 16) is accurate. This observation is emphasized by differential earnings. Women managers and administrators earn 52 percent of what males earn (Linden, 1981). Linden (1981) notes: "Differences in occupation, age and years of experience no doubt have a lot to do with this inequity--but not everything" (p. 70). Women hold fewer managerial level jobs than men, and women are paid less than men with similar jobs (Lavoie, 1977).

Differential Treatment of Women and Men in Organizations

A number of studies have demonstrated that there are "no differences of any consequence to management between the mental, motivational, or physical capacities of men and women" (Larwood et al., 1978, p. 585), yet

there is "discrimination against women" in business and governmental organizations (Athanassiades, 1974; Norton, Gustafson and Foster, 1977). Women have not been successfully integrated into positions of authority and responsibility (Terborg et al., 1977).

This lack of integration starts with entry level positions. Allison and Allen (1980) found that although women entering the labor force are equally as interested in money as men, women tend to choose lower paying professions such as teaching and nursing instead of higher paying professions such as chemistry. The authors propose two explanations for this behavior: (1) women's career choices are typically made in high school and high school programs and counselors may steer women away from science; or (2) discrimination in hiring may be so pervasive or perceived as so pervasive that it serves as a "barrier to entry." Thus, what seems like an uneconomic choice may be rational behavior under the circumstances. Even if women apply for jobs, they may be rejected. McIntyre, Moberg and Posner (1980) found that female entry-level job candidates who sent in unsolicited resumes and cover letters were less likely to receive interview offers or other positive responses than male candidates. In addition, company responses to female candidates took 2.6 days longer than responses to male candidates.

Differential treatment of women continues after they are employed. For example, employers may be reluctant to offer on-the-job training to female employees (Zellman, 1976), and competent males are rated more positively than equally competent females (Nieva and Gutek, 1980). The greatest proportion of women are in entry-level management positions while the lowest proportion are in top management (Powell, 1980). This dispropor-

tion may be due to the large influx of new female managers and will level out as the proportion of women in management stabilizes, or it may be that women managers occupy positions that do not lead to top management. Powell (1980) calls these positions "velvet ghetto functions," for example, personnel, public relations, and consumer affairs. These areas have typically been regarded as suitable for women, but the opportunities for advancement from these functions are limited. Women have a better chance of reaching the managerial level if they are in male-dominated occupations, because of the higher ratio of managerial to nonmanagerial positions in such occupations (Smith, 1979).

Rosen and Jerdee (1974) surveyed readers of the Harvard Business Review and found two general patterns of sex discrimination: (1) greater organizational concern for the careers of men than women; and (2) a degree of skepticism about women's abilities to balance work and family demands. They conclude that women are expected to change to satisfy organizational expectations of them. Such a view is reflected in Brenner's (1972) advice to employers of women aspiring to management. He believes that women generally require different managerial development activities than men. His suggestions include: (1) selecting as candidates for development women who have the characteristics considered most important for managers (for example, decisiveness, consistency, emotional stability); (2) selecting as potential positions for women managers those where the majority of the subordinate personnel are experienced; and (3) making role training a basic and continuing segment of the development. Apparently, according to Brenner, female managerial candidates are indecisive, inconsistent, emotionally unstable individuals who are capable of managing workers who already know

their jobs provided that the candidates receive a great deal of role training. Given attitudes such as this, it is no wonder Kanter and Stein (1979) observe that "there still lingers the question about whether women are getting ahead because of their competence or because of their sex and affirmative action pressure" (p. 23).

In discussing the enforcement of EEOC legislation, Hennig and Jardim (1977) note that while the law may control the formal structure of opportunities within an organization, the implementation of opportunities must take place within the informal structure of an organization--and informal structures are predominantly male. This is not unexpected since people whose type is represented in small proportion in an organization (for example, women) are likely to be excluded from informal peer networks (Kanter, 1977). Nevertheless, as Schein (1978) notes: "A woman's lack of ability to tap into the organizational-political network and gain power and influence can have a major detrimental effect on her ability to function effectively as a manager" (p. 264). Because of less interaction and communication with superiors, women have less opportunity to gain the training needed for advancement (Larwood et al., 1978). In addition, exclusion from informal influence relationships may limit a woman's performance effectiveness and diminish her motivation to perform (Schein, 1978).

Exclusion from informal influence relationships may be one reason women in managerial positions feel they have less opportunity to participate in decisions than men, that they do not have sufficient authority in their jobs, that too often decisions are imposed on them from above, and that they feel less free than men do to express disagreement with

superiors (Athanassiades, 1974).

In addition to being excluded from informal relationships, a woman may be given differential task assignments which prevent her from learning or developing essential administrative skills if her supervisor feels she is less likely than a male to be aggressive, forceful, competitive, or ambitious (Schein, 1978). This is a circular process. If women are not allowed access to informal work groups, sex role stereotyping is likely to continue, and women are likely to feel excluded from decision making or not receive the training they need for advancement. According to Larwood et al. (1978), "stereotypic prejudgment of women might end after hiring if women and men had equally close access to those evaluating them" (p. 586).

Stereotypic prejudgment is especially acute in the area of promotions. When supervisors make decisions on the basis of incomplete data or when specific evaluative criteria are not present, stereotypes may help decision makers fill in the missing information (Bartol, 1978). When data are missing or imprecise, managers are more likely to make choices on the basis of similarity to themselves in terms of personal values (Senger, 1971), personal characteristics (Pfeffer, 1977), or sex (Riger and Galligan, 1980). Sex is often a deciding factor in promotional decisions because both males and females believe that effective managers are male (Koehn, 1976; Schein, 1975). In addition, decisions about the future such as promotions, which require a great amount of inference, are more likely to involve evaluation bias (Nieva and Gutek, 1980; Smith, 1979). Rosen and Jerdee (1974) maintain that "in situations where the available information is ambiguous or contradictory, decision makers may fall back on preconceived attitudes (sex-role stereotypes . . .) to arrive at their ultimate decision" (p. 56). Since

most decision makers in organizations are male, discrimination in evaluation decisions (Athanassiades, 1974; Larwood et al., 1978) may explain, in part, why there are large numbers of women at lower levels of organizations and few at the top (Bartol, 1978).

Whether due to evaluation bias or some other reason, it is clear that women are not reaching the tops of organizational hierarchies as fast as men. Surprisingly, women are getting promoted, but their promotions are not carrying them up the hierarchy as fast as men (Stewart and Gudykunst, 1982). The promotion ratio is 1.8:1.0 for females and males to reach equal positions in a company (Flanders and Anderson, 1973). This so-called "pacification by promotion" encourages women to think they are advancing within a hierarchy even though their rate of progress is slower than comparable males.

Hoffmann and Reed (1981) argue against the conclusion that the low occupational status of women is due to bias or discrimination. In a survey of male and female clerks and supervisors in a company in which 82 percent of the entry level jobs were held by women but women were only 74 percent of those promoted, they concluded that male and female clerks were promoted in almost exactly the proportions in which they expressed interest in promotions. Men were nearly twice as likely as women to say they were interested in promotion. Hoffmann and Reed concluded that women were less ambitious for advancement than men, men were willing to give up more than women to accept a promotion (for example, accept a transfer or give up an optimal shift assignment), and women were substantially more likely than men to believe they lacked the ability to fulfill higher level positions. Those women who sought and accepted promotions displayed

characteristics that resembled male clerks and supervisors, for example many of the married women saw their jobs as more important than their spouses' jobs and earned more than their spouses. Thus, Hoffmann and Reed believe the differential promotion ratio between men and women is due to the tendency of women to make different choices than men. (Although the authors disclaim any bias, it should be noted that "XYZ Company" approached the authors to survey its personnel policies because the company was faced with a sex discrimination suit.)

Clearly, women are not advancing up organizational hierarchies as fast as men. Whether this differential advancement is due to bias, discrimination, choice, or inexperience is unclear.

Women's Attitudes toward Promotion

If Hoffmann and Reed (1981) are correct, women are not getting promoted as frequently as men because they are less interested in promotions that require sacrifices such as job transfers or less desireable working hours. While Hoffmann and Reed found many similarities between men and women who wanted promotions, other researchers have found a number of differences. While men tend to have a "plan-ahead strategy" for their careers, women tend to adopt a "work hard and you will be rewarded" attitude (Veiga, 1977). Men cite lack of information and/or skills as their major obstacles to promotion while many women exhibit "choice anxiety," they do not know what they want to do with their careers" (Veiga, 1977).

In part, women's waiting-to-be chosen attitude (Hennig and Jardim, 1977) may be because women have more negative opinions of their self-worth than men (Putnam and Heinen, 1976) or because of their lack of

understanding of the informal organizational system (Reif, Newstrom and Monczka, 1975). Women tend to see the organization as an integrated whole, while men differentiate between the formal and informal organization (Reif et al., 1977).

A recent study (Gould, 1979), however, found no difference between males and females in amount of career planning in upwardly mobile occupations. Apparently, women who desire promotion and are in occupations which allow for advancement are planning their careers. Thus, the difference in career planning observed earlier may be a result of occupations which do not allow for rapid mobility. Smith (1979) supports this notion. She found that workers in occupations with long chains of positions in the organizational hierarchy (i.e., a large administrative component) have a greater opportunity for advancement. Not only were there more men in high opportunity chains in the state civil service agencies she studied, but women in these chains had a lower rate of promotion (1.3 percent during 1977) than men (3.4 percent).

Lewin and Olesen (1980), however, argue that the upward mobility model is not the only appropriate model for understanding the relationships among women, work and success. They found that women in a traditionally female occupation, nursing, expressed two distinct orientations toward success. "Advancing nurses" expressed a traditional success orientation and worked toward gaining increased administrative responsibility. "Lateral nurses," on the other hand, defined personal satisfaction and a sense of work well done as their central dimensions of ambition and did not seek upward movement. Lateralness was seen as a desireable career pattern when the structure of the work situation, such

as public health nursing, provided considerable autonomy. Thus, Lewin and Olesen conclude: "Lack of progress in work evidenced by some women may not always be the direct result of discrimination. Pursuit of the heightened satisfactions of work itself may be significant motivation for some women" (p. 627).

There is some evidence that men's careers may not be as upwardly mobile as believed. Veiga (1981) surveyed managers up to the vice presidential level in three manufacturing corporations. These managers reported that 85 percent of their moves were upward; corporate estimates, however, were that 40 percent of the moves were upward and 51 percent were lateral. Kanter (1977) noted the inability of managers to stay at one level and gain respect; individuals have to move up in an organization even if they do not want to. Since mobility becomes synonymous with success (Veiga, 1981), managers may distort their perceptions in order to feel like they are advancing upward and, thus, succeeding.

Issues to be Considered

The above review of literature leads to the conclusion that there are at least four issues which must be addressed if the study of women as managers is to lead to any meaningful insights into gender differences: (1) differentiating highly mobile managers from less mobile managers; (2) differentiating promotion from advancement; (3) determining the effects of the "velvet ghetto"; and (4) determining the effects of communication on the advancement of women in organizations.

It appears that women who desire upward mobility may have attitudes which are more similar to men than to other women. Women who desire

promotion plan their careers as carefully as men (Gould, 1979) and are willing to sacrifice time and effort (Hoffmann and Reed, 1981) for their careers. Thus, in studying women as managers, it is essential to determine their desire for upward mobility. Women who do not desire mobility may be advancing at a slower rate than men, but may be satisfied with their progress. Some women in predominantly female occupations (such as nursing or library work) may be satisfied with lateral moves that provide autonomous working conditions.

Promotion for women may not mean advancement. Researchers studying women in organizations must differentiate between number of promotions and progress up the organizational hierarchy. Since women tend to receive more promotions than men but not advance as fast (Flanders and Anderson, 1973), researchers must determine what leads to a woman's advancement within an organization not what leads to promotion. Barriers to advancement must be identified. It will not do any good for women to be promoted if they are not getting anywhere.

Researchers need to examine the effects of the "velvet ghetto" (Powell, 1980) on women's careers within organizations. Women in functions such as personnel may be doubly disadvantaged in terms of promotion. First, opportunities for advancement are limited because of the low ratio of managerial to nonmanagerial positions in these areas. The hierarchy peaks sharply in these functions. In addition, the results of staff positions such as these are less visible and more difficult to evaluate than the output of line positions (Pfeffer, 1977). Because of the lack of measureable data, decisions about promotions in these areas are more likely to be

biased. Thus, women who desire advancement may be severely disadvantaged by choosing careers in these organizational functions.

Researchers need to examine the role of communication in the advancement of women in organizations. Managers spend 50 to 90 percent of their time in interpersonal communication--10 percent of this time is spent communicating with superiors (Sargent, 1978). Mulder (1960) claims that upward communication reduces the psychological distance between status levels and helps supordinates to be closer to and identify with their superiors. This may be especially important for women who tend to use personal liking as a prerequisite for a task-related relationship (Hennig and Jardim, 1977). Even sheer amount of communication may be a significant factor for women managers. Stewart and Gudykunst (1982) found that time spent communicating with a supervisor was a significant predictor of the hierarchical level of women within an organization. Women who spent more time communicating with their supervisors were at higher organizational levels. Communication with a supervisor may help prevent biased promotion decisions by providing more information about the woman manager and, thus, demonstrating her competence.

Given these issues, perhaps it is time to redefine success. The male model indicates that mobility is success (Veiga, 1981). Male managers will even distort their perceptions of the directions of their moves to conform to this model. To men, upward mobility is success. This model may be appropriate for some women managers, but not for all. For example, increased autonomy may be the desired goal for some women. Researchers must seek individuals' definitions of success and not automatically impose the upwardly mobile model when examining careers within organizations. Researchers mus

continue to examine their assumptions as they research women in organizations because, as Hennig and Jardim (1977) note, "it is after all going to be a long time before the men's world of business becomes anything like a people's place of work" (p. 213).

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